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TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [TU](#)
SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT
TUESDAY, AUGUST 12, 2008

In Today's Papers

Russia Advances into Georgian Territories

All news outlets report that, despite Georgia's cease-fire offer, Russian troops continued their advance into Georgian territories. Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak writes, "Russian Troops Cross the Line and Reject Sakashvili's Ceasefire." Liberal Radikal carries the headline, "Russia's Condition (for withdrawal): Sakashvili Must Go."

Islamist-oriented Zaman notes in a front-page headline, "The West Pressures for a Ceasefire," but nevertheless, "Russia Begins an Invasion," into Georgian territory. Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet cites the Russian RBK news agency as reporting Turkey closed its air space to a Ukrainian cargo plane carrying humanitarian aid to Georgia. Mainstream Sabah writes Georgians fleeing the war travel from Batumi to Turkey's Black Sea port city of Trabzon, where they board planes to Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir. Mainstream Milliyet reports the Georgian Embassy in Ankara said on Monday that the Georgian Foreign Ministry call on "all friendly countries and international organizations" for military assistance.

Erdogan Proposes a 'Caucasus Union'

All papers report Prime Minister Erdogan told the press Monday that Turkey could "join efforts to create a Caucasus Union modeled after the security agreement in the Balkans." "Peace in the Caucasus can be achieved if the U.S. and the EU support the idea of a Caucasus Union," Erdogan said, adding, "The U.S. and the EU could join the initiative," and, "so could Russia." Murat Yetkin of liberal Radikal writes, "The establishment of a Caucasus Union is important now more than ever and once things calm down, Turkey must initiate efforts toward this initiative." When journalists asked Erdogan about whether the developments in Georgia indicate Russia has aspirations regarding the BTC pipeline, Erdogan responded, "I do not want to think about such a possibility." Erdogan also denied yesterday's reports that Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin refused to return his phone calls. Islamist-oriented Zaman reports, "Erdogan never tried to contact Putin," but that, "a meeting with Putin would be vital for finding a peaceful settlement," and that, "peaceful diplomacy is vital for peace." In addition, mainstream Sabah reports "Georgian President Sakashvili called Erdogan to ask for humanitarian assistance."

U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney's comments are reported in Islamist-oriented Zaman as a headline, "The First Strong Reaction from the U.S.: This Will Not Go Unanswered." The paper also quotes U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary for European and Eurasian Affairs Matt Bryza's statements to reporters, "this situation looks like a genocide," and "the time has come for Russia to accept the ceasefire."

Meanwhile, BTC Foreign Relations Director Murat Lecompte told mainstream Hurriyet the reason for halt in oil flow through the BTC pipeline is not the conflict in Georgia but the August 5 explosion that caused a fire on the Turkish stretch of the BTC route. Lecompte said the pipeline was closed before clashes broke out in Georgia.

A commentary in the Islamist-oriented Zaman writes, "Georgia, through which the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline passes, is a transport route to the Caspian and Central Asian resources for Turkey as well as for Western countries. It seems Russia seeks to reclaim its influence over Georgia and control the BTC by playing the South Ossetia and Abkhazia cards."

Editorial Opinion: Georgia

"With Caution and Attention"

Fehmi Kuru wrote in Islamist-leaning Yeni Safak (8/12): "By this military operation, Saakashvili was hoping to end Georgia's problem with separatism. He most likely did not anticipate an immediate counter attack from Russia, or at least he hoped for strong NATO

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support to eliminate a potential counter attack. None of these calculations worked. Meanwhile, Russian PM Vladimir Putin continues to take a harsh stance. It is not clear if Putin will take this as an opportunity to rearrange the world system about which he complains, or if will he accept the American peace proposal at some point. The world is on the verge of some important developments and we have to watch them very carefully and cautiously."

"Russia and the Caucasus"

Mustafa Balbay wrote in leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet (8/12): "The war in the Caucasus is, in fact, a conflict between the United States and Russia. In the aftermath of the Soviet Era, the new world order has not worked properly so far. Because this new world order was nothing but the imposition of American unilateralism, at some point someone had to challenge this. The U.S. has demonstrated its supremacy over Russia and China by controlling the region as well as its energy resources, and now Russia has stood up to claim its turf via the Georgia conflict. Given the current picture, there is only one way to interpret it: The unilateral world system is no more."

"Being a Game Planner"

Erdal Safak wrote in mainstream Sabah (8/12): "Following his crazy gambles, it remains to be seen whether Saakashvili can keep his seat. Nevertheless, Georgia has lost South Ossetia and Abkhazia for good, which redistributes the cards in the Caucasus game. These recent developments also complicate the possibility of reaching a solution to the Karabakh issue. All of these indicate how serious instability is in the Caucasus and how this instability puts energy corridors at stake. At this point, the only way to avoid further conflict in the future is by uniting the Caucasus countries toward a joint goal for the future. The Caucasus is urgently in need of a stability pact like the one in the Balkans. Turkey first suggested this in 1999 and PM Erdogan reiterated the idea 2006 and yesterday to UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon. If Turkey initiates this effort, it is certain to be a wonderful and historic mission."

CHP Charges Leading AKP Figure with Corruption

All papers report opposition CHP deputy chairman Kemal Kilicdaroglu held a press conference Monday in which he accused the ruling AKP deputy chairman Saban Disli of requesting USD 1 million in bribes in order to change the zoning plans of a property in the Silivri neighborhood in Istanbul. Kilicdaroglu revealed a "protocol agreement" Disli signed, according to which Disli would be paid USD

1 million for changing the zoning plan on land owned by Disli and his partners before it was sold to the Tesco-Kipa company. The value of the property soared following the zoning change. Disli reportedly said the protocol was an "internal" document to record his share of money after the land sale was completed.

PKK Ambush in Erzincan

All papers: A military vehicle carrying 11 soldiers was ambushed by the PKK in the eastern province of Erzincan's Kemah town.

Mainstream Milliyet reports that soldiers went to Sariyazi village of Kemah after receiving information that PKK members took food and supplies from the village the night before. The military unit was attacked while returning from the village. A land mine was detonated with a remote control while the military vehicle was passing by. A lieutenant colonel and eight privates were killed in the blast. One captain and one private were seriously injured. Following the incident, security forces started an operation in the region to capture the terrorists.

Meanwhile, Sabah and Cumhuriyet report that in southern province of Hatay, a policeman saw a person leaving his bag on the rear wall of the Special Forces Police building. When the person was warned to stop by the police officer he tried to run away and opened fire on the police. He was killed during the clash. Cumhuriyet says 12 kg and Sabah says 15 kg. of C4 plastic explosives were found in his bag. The explosives were placed in a "Samavar" (a gadget used in

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making tea).

Massacre in Tuzla

All papers: Milliyet's headline reads "Massacre in Tuzla" and reports that a life boat constructed at Gisan shipyard in Tuzla was thrown into the sea with 19 workers aboard to test for weight control. Part of the boat was made of glass, which shattered and caused the boat to capsize. Three workers drowned while 16 others injured. Limter-Is Union leader Cem Dinc criticized the incident and said that "the workers were used as sand bags for testing."

Zapsu and Bagis Sues Michael Rubin

Mainstream Sabah reports that PM Erdogan's political advisor Cuneyt Zapsu and AKP Deputy Chairman Egemen Bagis sued Michael Rubin for calling them "bribe takers" and "liars" in the U.S. Bagis and Zapsu demand 20,000 YTL in compensation from Rubin.

TV News:
CNN Turk

Domestic News

- Dursun Karatas, the leader of the terrorist far left DHKP-C organization, died of cancer in Brussels.
- A fire on the Turkish stretch of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline, which began on August 5, was extinguished yesterday.
- Collective bargaining talks between the AKP government and labor unions will begin August 15.

International News

- Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari said the U.S. and Iraqi negotiators are "very close" to reaching a long-term security pact that will decide the fate of American troops in Iraq.
- The Russian currency drops after Prime Minister Vladimir Putin said "war has started" in the breakaway Georgian region of South Ossetia.
- Israeli security forces have started to use a foul-smelling liquid to disperse Palestinian protests in the occupied West Bank.

SILLIMAN